IN THE CLAIMS:

Please enter the following amended claims:

A16

1. (Amended) A method for producing from an optical isomer I of an amino acid represented by Formula (I):

$$R\text{-}CH(NH_2)\text{-}COOH \qquad (1)$$

wherein R is an optionally substituted C1-C12 alkyl group, an optionally substituted C4-C8 cycloalkyl group or an optionally substituted C6-C14 aryl group, an optical isomer II, said method comprising reacting a biological material which has an ability of converting said optical isomer I to said optical isomer II, the isomerism being on the basis of an asymmetric carbon atom to which both of an amino group and a carboxyl group are bound and said ability being not inhibited seriously by an amino acid transferase inhibitor β-chloro-D-alanine, β-chloro-L-alanine or gabaculine, with said optical isomer I.

2. (Amended) The method according to Claim 1, wherein said optical isomer I is a D-form and said optical isomer II is a L-form.

B1

3. (Amended) The method according to Claim 1, wherein said optical isomer I with which said biological material is reacted is present in a mixture with optical isomer II.

A17

5. (Amended) The method according to Claim 1, wherein said biological material is one obtained from a microorganism belonging to the genus *Arthrobacter*,

Cont A17

Flavimonas, *Klebsiella*, *Nocardia*, *Pseudomonas*, *Rhizobium*, *Saccharopolyspora* or *Streptomyces*.

A11 6. (Amended) The method according to Claim 1, wherein said biological material is one obtained from a microorganism classified to *Arthrobacter pascens*, *Flavimonas oryzihabitans*, *Klebsiella planticola*, *Nocardia diaphanozonaria*, *Pseudomonas chlororaphis*, *Pseudomonas oleovorans*, *Pseudomonas oxalaticus*, *Pseudomonas taetrolens*, *Rhizobium meliloti*, *Saccharopolyspora hirsuta* or *Streptomyces roseus*.

A11 7. (Amended) The method according to Claim 1, wherein said biological material is one obtained from *Arthrobacter pascens* strain IFO12139, *Flavimonas oryzihabitans* strain JCM2952, *Klebsiella planticola* strain JCM7251, *Nocardia diaphanozonaria* strain JCM3208, *Pseudomonas chlororaphis* strain IFO3521, *Pseudomonas oleovorans* strain IFO13583, *Pseudomonas oxalaticus* strain IFO13593, *Pseudomonas taetrolens* strain IFO3460, *Rhizobium meliloti* strain IFO14782, *Saccharopolyspora hirsuta subsp.kobensis* strain JCM9109 or *Streptomyces roseus* strain IFO12818.

(8.) (Amended) A method for improving the optical purity of an amino acid represented by Formula (I):

$$R\text{-}CH(NH_2)\text{-}COOH \qquad (1)$$

wherein R is an optionally substituted C1-C12 alkyl group, an optionally

Cont A17

substituted C4-C8 cycloalkyl group or an optionally substituted C6-C14 aryl group, said method comprising reacting a biological material which has an ability of converting an optical isomer I of said amino acid to an optical isomer II, the isomerism being on the basis of an asymmetric carbon atom to which both of an amino group and a carboxyl group are bound and said ability being not inhibited seriously by an amino acid transferase inhibitor β-chloro-D-alanine, β-chloro-L-alanine or gabaculine, with said amino acid represented by Formula (I).

Amend C3

9. (Amended) The method according to Claim 8, wherein said optical isomer I is a D-form and said optical isomer II is a L-form.

Add C4